

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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President Obama's Message on America's Independence Day, 2010	1
President Obama Wants Israelis, Palestinians to Talk	1
President Medvedev Invites Silicon Valley to Russia	2
Reaching Out to a Mobile World	3

President Obama's Message on America's Independence Day, 2010

Obama pays tribute to service members who served, sacrificed for freedom

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary
July 2, 2010

Message by President Obama on Independence Day, 2010

Today we celebrate the 234th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the beginning of a great experiment, American democracy. In every corner of our country, we recall the valor and vision of patriots from Thirteen Colonies who declared independence from a powerful empire and gave birth to a new Nation. We gather in town centers and wave flags in parades not only to recall this history we share, but also to honor the vibrant and enduring spirit of America established on this day.

For those gallant first Americans, such a Nation as ours may have seemed like an unattainable dream. Their concept was revolutionary: a government of, by, and for the people.

Yet, our Founders' tenacity, resolve, and courage in the face of seemingly impossible odds became the bedrock of our country. That essence has permeated our land and inspired generations of Americans to explore, discover, and redefine the outer reaches of our infinite potential. It has become the foundation of the American dream.

This dream has not come without tremendous cost. From the farmers and tradesmen who served in militias during our American Revolution to the present day women and men protecting our Nation around the world, the sacrifices of our Armed Forces have been extraordinary. Today we pay tribute to our service members, many of whom have paid the ultimate sacrifice. We also acknowledge the contributions and sacrifices of their loving families. It is their heroism that has paved the remarkable path of freedom's march.

Just as this day serves as a reminder of the immeasurable bravery of those who have made America what it is today, it also renews in us the solemn duty we share to ensure our Nation lives up to its promise. We must not simply commemorate the work begun over two and a quarter centuries ago; we are called to join together, hoist their mantle upon our shoulders, and carry that spirit of service into tomorrow.

America again faces a daunting set of challenges, yet our history shows these are not insurmountable. We need

only to draw upon the perseverance of those before us -- our Founders who declared and fought for their ideals; our ancestors who emigrated here and struggled to build a better future for their children; and our pioneers and entrepreneurs who blazed trails that have continually expanded our horizons. Their spirit -- our spirit -- will guide our Nation now and in our bright future.

On our Nation's birthday, may we come together in the enduring spirit of America to begin that work anew. I wish you all the best for a happy Fourth of July. May God Bless all those who serve, and may God Bless the United States of America.

BARACK OBAMA

President Obama Wants Israelis, Palestinians to Talk

Washington — President Obama's July 6 discussions with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will focus on moving Israel and the Palestinians toward direct talks aimed at reaching a peace agreement that includes the creation of a Palestinian state, White House officials said July 2.

For the past few weeks, both sides have been engaged in indirect or "proximity" talks facilitated by U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace George Mitchell. Dan Shapiro, senior director for Middle East and North Africa in the National Security Council, told reporters July 2 that those discussions have been moving in a positive direction.

"The [proximity] talks, which have always been understood as a mechanism to narrow gaps in order to get to direct talks, actually have made progress and the gaps have been narrowed," Shapiro said, adding, "We are encouraged by the progress that's been made."

President Obama and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas reviewed the progress of the talks during Abbas' June 9 visit to the White House, and Shapiro said that two additional rounds of proximity talks through Mitchell have taken place since then and "have further advanced the effort."

When Netanyahu meets with Obama at the White House, it will be "an important opportunity for the two leaders ... to engage in some of the details that, obviously, Senator Mitchell has been dealing with on a daily basis," Shapiro said. "Often those kinds of meetings help spur additional progress, in this case toward narrowing gaps getting toward direct talks," he said.

Mitchell met with Netanyahu in Jerusalem June 30 after visiting the Kerem Shalom crossing between Israel and the Gaza Strip. On June 20, Israel announced it was

relaxing some of its restrictions on materials it would allow into Gaza, a move that was welcomed by President Obama and others in the international community.

In his remarks June 30 with Netanyahu, Mitchell told the Israeli leader, "There's been a great deal of progress in terms of permitting additional goods into Gaza, and I was assured by your people there that whatever the demand is, the capacity will be there to meet it."

Shapiro said Israel's June 20 changes are beginning to make "a significant difference in the lives of people on the ground in Gaza.

"Already ... we have seen some significant work by the Israelis to implement the new policy. More is coming in the days ahead, and I think the president and the prime minister really look forward to reviewing that progress as well as exploring what additional steps are possible to continue to address what has been an unsustainable situation in Gaza," Shapiro said.

Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications Ben Rhodes said at the July 2 briefing that in the meetings with the Israeli leadership, the Obama administration has placed its focus on "building on what really has been some momentum in a number of areas," mentioning Israel's allowance of more goods into Gaza and progress in the proximity talks.

Rhodes said, "We believe we could create an opportunity here in the coming weeks and months to make some substantial progress over the course of the summer. And this meeting between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama is yet another opportunity to do so."

President Medvedev Invites Silicon Valley to Russia

By Phillip Kurata
Staff Writer

Washington — When Russian President Dmitry Medvedev visited the United States June 22, he flew past Washington and landed first in San Francisco, on the western side of the North American continent.

This travel itinerary spoke something of what Medvedev wanted to achieve on his first visit as Russian president to the United States.

San Francisco is just north of "Silicon Valley," the home of many U.S. high-tech companies. Medvedev is seeking help from Silicon Valley executives as he attempts to create Russia's own high-tech center, which he envisions in the Moscow suburb of Skolkovo.

"I would like to have my visit be translated into full-fledged relations and into cooperation with those [Silicon

Valley] companies," Medvedev said at a reception hosted by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Medvedev wants to modernize the Russian economy by encouraging information technology, biotechnology, clean energy technology and nuclear technology startups and research and development. Medvedev received a pledge of support from Schwarzenegger, who said he will lead a high-tech trade mission to Russia to bolster the chances of Skolkovo's success. The Russian president was escorted by the governor as he called on several Silicon Valley business leaders June 23.

In a meeting with Evan Williams, chief executive of Twitter, a social networking service, Medvedev opened an account and wrote in Russian, "Hello, everyone! I'm on Twitter. And this is my first tweet." Twitter's executives told Medvedev that the company plans to expand its service in the Russian language. Medvedev also met with entrepreneur Steve Jobs, the chief executive of Apple Inc., who gave the Russian president the latest version of the iPhone.

At Cisco Systems Inc., chief executive John Chambers announced that the company will invest \$1 billion over the coming decade in Skolkovo and the Russian high-tech sector. In a detailed statement of its investment plans in Russia, Cisco says it "is committed to support the building of entrepreneurial capacity in Russia." Cisco will increase the number of its networking academies in Russia from 133 to 300 to develop Russia's technology talent and will put up \$175,000 for the I-Prize, a competition for innovation in Russia.

JOBS' ADVICE

After completing his visits to companies, Medvedev gave a speech at Stanford University, the academic hub of Silicon Valley. There, he revealed advice that Jobs had given him that morning.

"Unfortunately for us [in Russia], venture capitalism is not going so well so far," Medvedev said. "No one wants to run the risk. It's a problem of culture, as Steve Jobs told me today. We need to change the mentality."

Medvedev's visit was heralded by high-tech industry specialists. "There is something about the head of one of the most powerful states in the world going directly to Silicon Valley with an explicit appeal to investors that makes a powerful statement about today's eroding boundaries that have separated industry, government and the nations that host them," said Todd Khozein of Second Muse, an innovation consulting firm in Silicon Valley.

Yet, Robert Litan, a co-author of Good Capitalism, Bad Capitalism, cautioned that Silicon Valley is tough to

replicate because it and other successful innovation centers were unplanned. He said that Silicon Valley started as the home of just two high-tech companies — computer maker Hewlett-Packard Company and Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation, which became Intel Corporation, the world's leading semiconductor producer. "Those were accidents," he said. "Nobody set out to plan them. Typically, it takes one or two very successful people to spark a cluster to take off."

Michael Ducker, a market development specialist with business consulting company J.E. Austin Associates Inc., said that collaboration is at the core of successful innovation, and that it is not easy to create. "There have been hundreds, if not thousands, of attempts to do that," he said. "You need to create an environment where it is easy to do business, and the bureaucracy and other stifling things in the economy are eliminated." Ducker described innovation as an "organic" process that occurs through unfettered interaction between business and scientific communities. He said governments are most effective when they create conditions to "allow" this to happen, rather than try to "make" it happen.

Khozein said that Russia, working in collaboration with foreign partners, has the potential to bring forth "a new culture of innovation."

In the United States, an important component of the collaboration that has resulted in high-tech business clusters has been academic institutions. The innovation center in the Boston area, known as the Route 128 cluster, started in a way similar to Silicon Valley. Scientists left their jobs in academia and opened their own companies. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) recently released a study documenting the impact this one school has had on innovation. The study says that, over the course of the school's history, MIT engineers have started roughly 26,000 companies, which have employed more than 3 million people while racking up more than \$2 trillion in sales.

While Medvedev may not have left California with a perfect blueprint for Skolkovo, Khozein called the Russian's visit to the valley "an opportunity." He said Russia will be able to learn much from Silicon Valley, but added, "I hope that Skolkovo's eventual infrastructure will ultimately be inspired by, rather than strictly defined by, its Western predecessor."

Reaching Out to a Mobile World

By J. Scott Orr
Staff Writer

Washington — The global digital landscape, once dominated by computers tethered to desktops, is being reshaped by the empowerment and freedom offered by

low-cost, Web-enabled mobile devices. More revolution than evolution, the trend will make the mobile Web the dominant Internet platform soon, most experts predict.

For populations that now lack traditional Internet connections, the shift promises broader access to all manner of information: crop prices for farmers, educational resources for students, medical information for health care providers, to name just a few. You might even be reading this on the mobile Web right now via the recently launched m.America.gov, a mobile website aimed at enhancing engagement between America and international audiences.

"Today in any part of the world — even in places where there is no electricity, where there is war, where a natural disaster occurred — there are still mobile phones that work," said Stéphane Boyera, of the World Wide Web Foundation. "Clearly, most people that are living in developing countries and in rural areas will meet the Web through their mobile only."

Boyer added that, with 90 percent of the world's population currently covered by cellular networks, the migration to mobile appears unstoppable. He said that while there are 5 billion mobile subscriptions worldwide, only 1.8 billion people have Internet access via landline connections. "In developing countries, the development of Web access through mobile phones will grow quickly. We have already begun to see this growth in different countries, such as South Africa, Indonesia, India and Nigeria," Boyera said.

The U.S. government recently announced the opening of its apps gallery, at apps.USA.gov, featuring cell phone applications and mobile Web pages, including m.America.gov, which offers news, features, blogs, video and podcasts, and m.USEmbassy.gov, which allows users to find and contact U.S. embassies worldwide.

"Through mobile apps, citizens can leverage government information to make decisions affecting their daily lives, whether checking airport wait times in line at the airport or scanning a bar code at their local store to check for food and product recalls," said Dave McClure, General Services Administration associate administrator of citizen services and innovative technologies.

No less an expert than Microsoft chairman and philanthropist Bill Gates said during a recent forum at the University of California, Berkeley, that reliance on a PC-based Web is no longer the imperative it once was, particularly in the developing world. The trend toward mobile, he said, will advance along with access to newer mobile technologies.

"You don't need personal computer connectivity to deal

with childhood deaths. Amazingly, there are lots of cell phones in these countries,” Gates said. He added that as new technologies — like smart phones and faster 3G and 4G networks — gain broader penetration, the benefits will multiply. “Voice connectivity actually is pretty widespread already, 2G-type stuff, and the more powerful stuff, that will come along,” he said.

Gates’ prediction that advanced technologies will spread quickly is borne out by recent studies. The United Nations International Telecommunication Union, which tracks communication technology issues, says that 1 billion of the world’s 5 billion existing mobile subscriptions are for broadband connections, and that number is growing. At the same time, research firm Gartner reports that of the 1.2 billion mobile devices sold in 2009, 172.4 million were smart phones, a 23.8 percent increase over 2008.

Stephen R. Ruth, director of the International Center for Applied Studies in Information Technology at George Mason University, said the global deployment of mobile devices already is having a significant impact on the information resources available to people in developing countries. He cited education as among the mobile Web’s most exciting frontiers.

“It’s simply amazing to consider the potential of using these kinds of Web-enabled devices to allow the spread of information to those who until now had very limited, or no, access to the Internet. ... For example, a student today can pull down some of the best lectures and best material right to their mobile device and they can even get a college degree that way. The potential impact of that is limitless,” he said.

The experience in Africa shows how mobile is taking hold in developing regions. According to a report from auditing giant Ernst & Young, the telecommunications market in Africa grew 49.3 percent between 2002 and 2007, compared to a 27.4 percent growth rate in Asia. The average mobile penetration for the continent was at 37 percent, a figure that is expected to rise to 61 percent by 2012.

“From a continent where you would struggle to find a phone 10 years ago to one that is on the forefront of a telecommunications revolution, Africa is very much the mobile continent,” the report said.

Seizing on this potential, *m.America.gov* is designed to reach users who rely on mobile devices as Internet enablers offering robust content including text, photographs, graphics, video and audio. The new platform features mobile-optimized current news, topical features, blogs, texts and transcripts of speeches and events, information about America, a directory of U.S. embassies worldwide and search. With a few taps of a

mobile device keyboard or screen, users can catch up on the latest news from Washington, get information on visas, locate their local U.S. Embassy, research U.S. history and learn about American life.

The *m.America.gov* website is accessible on any Internet-enabled cellular phone or other mobile device and requires no download of application software. Mobile visitors to the desktop site *www.America.gov* are automatically redirected to the new mobile platform.

While it is true that many cell phones in developing countries lack Internet connectivity, that is changing. According to the World Wide Web Foundation, even today’s low-end cell phones give users some level of access to the Web.

“Web technologies can provide significantly more powerful capabilities for people, even on simple mobile phones. Voice and numeric keypad interfaces to the Web through simple mobile phones can give people with very low reading skills an ability to find and access services. Phones capable of supporting simple Web browsers and applications are becoming more widely available at reasonable prices,” the group said.

Global financial services firm Morgan Stanley said in a recent report that the mobile Web is growing much faster than the desktop Internet did and that in emerging markets “the Internet will be mobile.”

“We believe more users may connect to the Internet via mobile devices than desktop PCs within five years,” said Mary Meeker, leader of Morgan Stanley’s global tech research team.

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